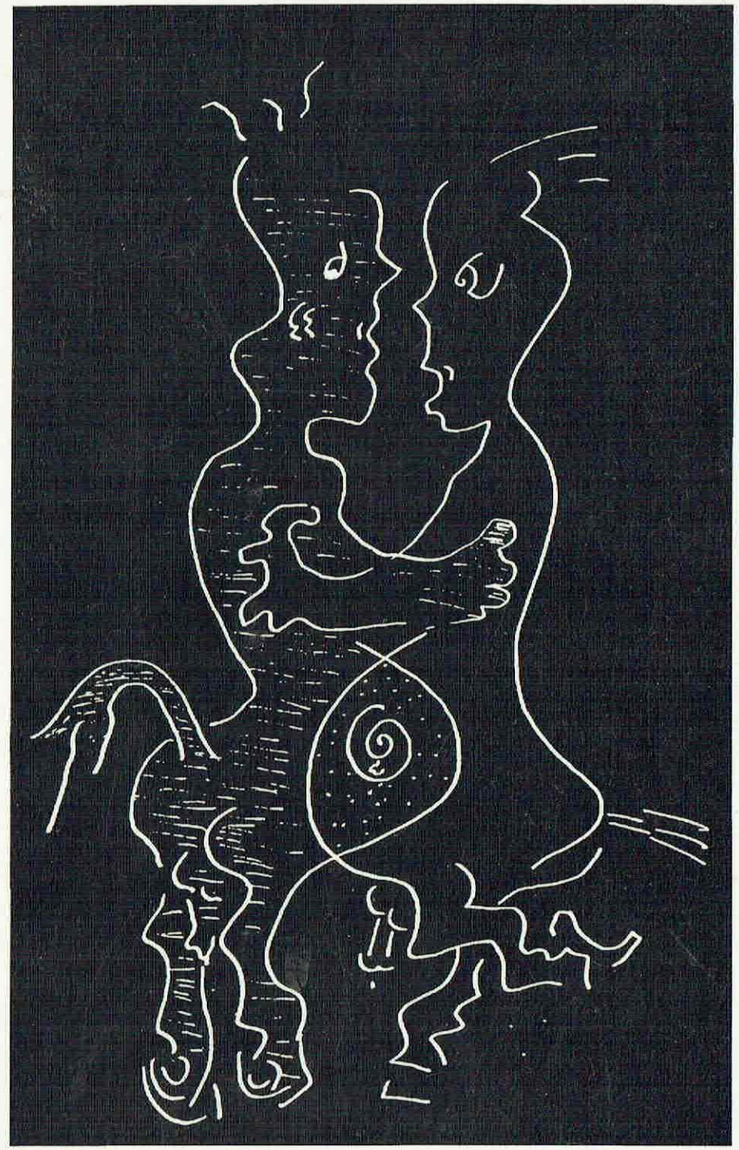
DANCING ON MY DADDIES GRAVE



M.F.A. II THESIS

MISA MIELE MANDIGO

MARCH 7, 8, 9

THEATER II 9:00 P.M.

MFA Thesis Proposal & Post Performance Summary

Misa Miele Mandigo
Dancing on my Daddies Grave
March 7,8,9 1996
Theater II

for Tessa

0.

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i am a miracle
i survived for some special purpose
dance is a part of that purpose
it blows me away
to think about that
surviving

January 1996

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 1:00 P.M. TATUM PRODUCTION MEETING	9	10 CONTACT SCOTT DUNCAN	11	12	13
14	15 1:00 P.M. TATUM PRODUCTION MEETING	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 1:00 P.M. TATUM PRODUCTION MEETING	23	24 CONTACT STEVE GUNTHER	25	26	27
28	29 1:00 P.M. TATUM PRODUCTION MEETING	30	31			

December 95

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 96

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

Printed by Calendar Creator Plus on 1/11/96

February 1996

Monthly Planner

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 M.F.A. 1	*2* M.F.A. 1	*3*
4	*5* 1:00 P.M. PRODUCTION MEETING	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
11	*12* 1:00 P.M. PRODUCTION MEETING	*13*	*14*	*15* SOUND DUE	*16* DESIGNS DUE	*17*
18	*19* 1:00 P.M. PRODUCTION MEETING	*20*	*21*	*22* 6:00 RUN THROUGH DESIGNERS PRESENT	*23* 6:00 HANG & RIG	*24* 12-5 FOCUS
25 DARK	*26* 6:00 FOCUS	*27* 6:00 TECH	*28*	*29* 7:00 FLY THROUGH POSTERS UP		

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March 1996

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 PROGRAM INFO TO CLYDE	*2* 1ST DRESS 10:00 FIX 11-2 GO
3	*4* DRESS 5:00 FIX 6:00 CALL 7:00 GO	*5* DRESS W/ MAKEUP 5:00 FIX & VIDEO PREP 6:00 CALL 7:00 GO	*6* FINAL DRESS 7:00 CALL 8:00 GO PHOTOS	*7* PERFORMANCE 6:30 CALL 8:00 GO	*8* PERFORMANCE 6:30 CALL 8:00 GO	*9* PERFORMANCE 6:30 CALL 8:00 GO STRIKE
10	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*
17	*18*	*19*	*20*	*21*	*22*	*23*
24	*25*	*26*	*27*	*28*	*29*	*30*
31						

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Printed by Calendar Creator Plus on 1/11/96

Dramatis Personae

Choreographer & Producer	Misa Mandigo	255-8158
Sound Design	Russell Burt 818	344-3301
Composers	Russell Burt 818	344-3301
	Stephen Kelly	569-0389
	Misa Mandigo	255-8158
Lighting Design	Phil Mooers 818	360-9525
Scenic Design	Michael Iannoli	254-1080
Technical Director	Derek Dutilly	253-1436
Costume Design	Misa Mandigo	255-8158
Poster/Program Design	Misa Mandigo	255-8158
Stage Manager	Troy Mitchell	288-2137

Crew

Assistant Stage Manager	Dominique Yen	222-9271
House Manager	Tessa Nebrida	259-5209
Light Board Operator	Allison Westfall	295-7672
Sound Board Operator	Eun Jeon Kim 818	789-1264
Wardrobe	Keisha Clarke	287-4218
	Rebecca Torres	290-2859
Running Crew	Jamie Kotewa	255-6265
	Yeko Ladzekpo	287-4249
Ushers	Jolie Pollman	287-4249
	Vanessa Jue 818	886-0921

Cast

	Nycole Merritt	222-7352
	Amy You 818	243-1383
	Emma Nagata	222-7047
	Levi Gonzales	257-8969
	Kathleen Reese	257-8969
	Rainbow Underhill	255-2848
	Jessica Wallenfels	287-3387
	Tiffani Snow 818	368-6131
	Tiffany Parish	288-1903
	Oren Bar-noy	222-7847

Rehearsal Schedule

Week I

Monday	1/15	7-9	Entire Cast (no Rainbow)
Tuesday	1/16	6-7 8-9:30	Trio Levi
Wednesday	1/17	6-7	Kathleen
Thursday	1/18	4-5	Kathleen
Friday	1/19	5-6 6-8	Rainbow Entire Cast (no Rainbow)

Week II

Monday	1/22	7-9	Entire Cast (no Rainbow)
Tuesday	1/23	6-7	Trio
Wedneday	1/24	6-7 8-9:30	Kathleen Levi
Thursday	1/26	4-5 5:30-7	Kathleen Trio
Friday	1/26	5-6 6:30-8	Rainbow Partial Cast (tech M.F.A. I)
Saturday	1/27	11:30-12	Partial Cast

Week III

No Rehearsals M.F.A. I concert

Week IV

Wednesday	2/14	8-9:30	Levi
Friday	2/16	5-6 6:30-8	Rainbow Partial Cast
Sunday	2/18	4-6	Entire Cast (no Rainbow)

Week V

Monday	2/19	6-8	Entire Cast
Thursday	2/22	7-9	Run-Through for faculty

Week VI

Tuesday	2/27	8-10	Tech
Thursday	2/29	7-9	Fly Through
Saturday	3/2	11-2	First Costume

Week VII

Monday	3/4	7 Go	Dress
Tuesday	3/5	7 Go	Dress W/Makeup
Wednesday	3/6	9 Go	Final Dress
Thursday	3/7	9 Go	Performance
Friday	3/8	9 Go	Performance
Saturday	3/9	9 Go	Performance

Budget

	Programs	$30
	Posters	$45
	Installation	$90
	Costumes	$300
	Set design	$200
	Promotion	$85
TOTAL		$750

Introduction: Kogi & Koi

Five years ago a friend asked me to light a work she was doing in collaboration with a concert pianist. Reluctantly I agreed not knowing what lay in store. The concert happened to be at a favorite spot of mine in my home town. I loved the concert hall not for its acoustics but for the haven of the koi pond nearby: a rectangular pool outlined by blocks of sandstone protected by a gracious pine that kindly drooped an eloquent branch over the murky waters. Large silent torpedoes flipping fins occasionally surfaced to offer quizzical eyes to my queries or affirm my stillness with their own. At intermission I made my way under the light of a powerful waxing moon to make a pact with my submerged friends. Shaken by the beauty I had just heard, I shook my fist at the dark waters-searching for words, angrily wiping away constipated tears. I began to speak haltingly to the unseen sleeping beneath the surface. "If only I could make art that would move me as this man moves me, if only...if only..." Words slipped away. I vowed to dedicate my life to releasing self, to finding the way to allow equally powerful works of art to come through me. That vow lay dormant four years within me.

Several years later a book came to me about the Amerindian Kogi of Colombia and their message to the world. In short, the Kogi have determined that our industrial society is rotting the heart of the world and their message to us as 'younger brothers' is: stop. The belief system elucidated by the spiritual leaders of the Kogi blended beautifully with the discoveries made by self in a quest for spiritual revitalization. The core concept of the Kogi is that of balance between the spiritual and material, between nature and the actions of man. The Kogi believe the universe is informed by 'aluna' the flux that runs through all things as thread runs through cloth. For the Kogi the spiritual counterpart- invisible to the younger brother, of every rock, river, and tree exists in 'aluna'. I found this belief intriguing. Several months before reading about this, while working on my first sculpture, a peculiar ability unearthed. My hands, heart, and eyes worked together searching for the truth of what desired to be birthed. Seeing. Vision. Quest. Fuzzy is what I saw as I looked past the space of the studio and beyond into the realm of imagination-or spirit.

Clarity is what I saw when the sculpting tool guided by the heart revealed my perception of form. I was stunned-having never sculpted before-with the results. It was then that I embraced the notion that art pre-exists on some spiritual dimension waiting to be made manifest. My growing ability to see in a new way was validated by my reading of how the Kogi nurture sight from the innermost eye. The student mama, or moro, is raised from birth and shut away where there is no light or fire. Only at night is the baby allowed outside. At four the child is weaned from the mother that lives in a nearby house and cared for solely by the elders. The child grows and is said to begin to sing-all by itself it sings. All the world he sees with his minds eye. The child is reared in the spirit world, wears a hat to shade his head from the moon, and begins to hear the inner music of the universe. He acts in accordance with what he hears. He begins to dance.

And so I too began to dance the year I sold everything I owned to travel to Switzerland. Awareness came. In a valley in Ticino the vibration of a mountain sang with my resonating soul. I dropped to a moss covered boulder speechless-in awe. The mist from a tempestuous snake of a river and the halo of clouds embracing my mountain punctuated the lesson. There is no greater work of art than creation itself. Humanity is a part of this beauty which does not lie. If we as creative beings desire to bring forth that which reflects our relationship to "greatness" as parts in the whole then greater degrees of integrity ought to be sought. Shortly thereafter a vision, Rodin's sculptures, and Rilke's poetry confirmed this realization. I auditioned for the dance department at U.C.S.B. and ignored the letter I had received from Stanford University offering funding for a P.H.D. in economics. Truth became my mantra. I let go of everthing. Dance led me to a door. I opened it.

M

WHY AM I HERE?

Post traumatic stress

M

D

M.P.DISORDER

1234567123456712345 67STOP

M.P.DISORDER

RACHEL?

1234567123456712345671234567STOP

1234567

WHY?

and the big wave crashed into my
nightmare spilling over the curls
lining the lip of dawn
before i wake i step
on a treadmill
and hold my pulsating
heart to god

I INTEND

TO

HEAL

It is my intent to It is my intent to it my intent it to heal How?

Art in every way shape and form

this is my **proposition** stated or put forward for consideration:
i have come to Cal Arts to heal. The environment becomes a container for my process. i seek to jump. Leave. Refrain. Depart.
Academia bores me. Other ways challenge me
but it takes awhile to figure it out.

Language has its own rhythm

dance has its own rhythm

(ways of what?

presenting ideas).

dances exist in time and space shouldn't a proposal reflect this

and if it is my desire to birth 'stuff' from the 'aluna'

of what use is a well worn road fresh starts are for old sages but man's intellect

defi es the obvious
and
dance to me is not about the obvious.
then heed the dictum of

Vedantists: "The gods hate the obvious and love the **obscure**."

at present my ever evolving conception of dance is viewing it as moving

metaphor metaphor
that

fuels myth •

Ask me a question.
Fine.
I'll answer.

i chose not to present my **intent** in the language of commerce and academia.

it reflects process

my exploits lead me down peculiar paths.

often they are misunderstood-sometimes because i've been too hermetic; sometimes because others prefer "just the facts, m'am" to the space in which to evolve their own interpretations.

But why? Was my Answer confusing? Departure from language? Why an installation? Did you notice that the writing in the room had no punctuation

Why ?

In Aluna Commas and Periods melt like ICE IN THE SUN.

My work is an attempt to walk in breath in the collective unconscious wearing meditations of truth for a cloak and in that darkness and even deformity to find the spark of transformation and healing.

My dance is.
at last. out....

it feels silly to write of my **intent** now. i've too much information. is it fair to the others or to me?

i am ready to return to language

but why did I have to go away ?

(To heal.)
to find all the locked up lost parts
of self in the collective.
Specificity is not the intent.
honesty is.

Joe Goode Crystine Lawson Rilke Rodin Maya Angelou

Trauma and Recovery
A history lesson

How does one recover from trauma?

Start with creating a 'safe' haven for oneself-a strong support system.

Are there different stages of recovery?

Yes. But it is not such that one completes itself before another is visited. If the process were broken down into three levels one might spend time in the first which allows one to move to the second which takes one back to the first to the third and so on.

Confusing!

Tell me about it. At least it tends to work in an upward spiral.

What are the stages of healing?

Before I answer your question I think a synopsis of the history of the treatment of trauma and recovery is needed to place this work in the proper context. Three times over the past century a systematic study of psychological trauma has surfaced into public awareness. The first was hysteria, the second shell shock, the third sexual and domestic violence.

A French neurologist , Jean-Martin Charcot, was the patriarch of the study of hysteria. He approached his work as a taxonomist emphasizing observation, description, and classification. Charcot focused on the symptoms of hysteria without consideration of cause. Janet and Freud, in the mid 1890's independently arrived at similar formulation's: hysteria as a condition caused by psychological trauma. They discovered that hysterical symptoms could be alleviated when traumatic memories were recovered and put into words (the talking cure).

By 1896 Freud believed he had found the cause. He published his findings in a report on 18 case studies titled 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' in which he states "I therefore put forward the thesis that at the bottom of every case of hysteria there are one or more occurrences of premature sexual experience..." The absence of a socio-political context to support his investigation caused Freud's work to be met with a stony silence by his elders and peers. Freud recanted his work. The implication of his theory being correct, and his patient's story true, proved beyond credibility, Freud found what he called "perverted acts against children" to be endemic among the proletariat of Paris and the bourgeois of Vienna. It seemed beyond belief for cultured and refined citizens to engage in such practices. An end was brought to this line of inquiry. A patient of Breuer, given the pseudonym Anna O. , carried the exploration of hysteria to its logical conclusion.

After Breuer abandoned his work with Anna O. she remained ill for several years. The mute hysteric who had invented the “talking cure” regained her sanity and found her voice in the women’s liberation movement. Under the pseudonym Paul Berthold she authored a play entitled ‘women’s rights’. Under her own name, Bertha Pappenheim, she became a prominent feminist social worker, intellectual, and organizer. At her death she was commemorated by the philosopher Martin Buber: I not only admired her but loved her, and will love her until the day I die. There are people of spirit and there are people of passion, both less common than one might think. Rarer still are the people of spirit and passion. But rarest of all is a passionate spirit...”.

It was not until the catastrophe of W.W.I that the public consciousness was forced to consider the reality of psychological trauma. I think ritual abuse survivors identify most closely with prisoners of war-something like auschwitz in preschool-g-d it sucks. Anyway, men began to break down in shocking numbers acting like “hysterical” women. Imagine that! They screamed and wept uncontrollably. They froze and could not move (I can’t tell you how many times early on in my memory work I sat frozen at the breakfast table telling my body pour o.k. pour just pour the f---ing soy milk on the toastie o’s please-pour).

They became mute and unresponsive. They lost their memory and capacity to feel. British psychologist Charles Myers attributed the symptoms to the concussive effects of exploding shells hence the term "shell shock". It didn't take long for the military psychiatrists to gather that men who had not been exposed to any physical trauma exhibited the syndrome as well. The shrinks were forced to admit that the symptoms were due to psychological trauma.

They gave electric shocks to treat hysterical symptoms such as mutism, sensory loss, or motor paralysis (my mother would have **loved** this work). The nerve! These patients were recorded in history by medical writers as "moral invalids" - as if human slaughter is free and natural as making love. A patient of British psychiatrist Lewis Yealland was treated for his mutism with electric shocks applied to his throat. As he was shocked Yealland cried out "remember, you must behave as the hero I expect you to be...". Trauma survivors find this attitude to be aggravating, disvalidating, and humiliating. The notion that we should toughen up, smile, think positive. A completely inappropriate response given the horrific nature of the circumstances. The path to recovery includes having the courage to pass through the appropriate phases of: recognition, connecting to the knowledge of the event, associating the terror and pain, responding with anger at inequity, grieving the losses, and then moving on.

As ought be evident by now, facing the dark side of mankind's nature is extremely difficulty for society. It is much easier to believe that it does not exist. Society even goes as far as to blame the victim and support the perpetrator-anything to hide behind the shield of denial-so we don't have to look at what it means to be human. As one might guess, a few years after the end of the war medical interest in the subject of psychological trauma faded once again. Then there was W.W.II. The interest in combat neurosis came and went with it...but....after the **Vietnam war** a large-scale investigation of the long-term effects of combat was undertaken...and boy...was that a fortunate thing for survivors of ritual abuse. Until then they were diagnosed as schizophrenic and more often that not locked up. Their stories were simply beyond credibility. Psychologists began to listen when they noticed that a similarity between the "flashbacks" of Vietnam veterans and those who experienced events equally as horrific on the home front.

O.K. enough already . Can we move one?

I just thought if you understood how hard it is for society to look at our "problem", how difficult the process is, you might be more tolerant, and appreciate what it is our work is about.

Which is?

Healing damnit healing. Art. When we create we draw close to the truth of our beauty, our centers, that pinch off the old creative block that birthed the universe in one big bang of an orgasm-love y'know love.

I know you quit smoking tobacco, have you changed to manure? and what about those stages of healing? Which stage does making dances fall under?

All of them. You know my dad used to call me Anna.

O.?

Really!

The Struggle to Create

Zeroing in

"each time that I have had something to say
I said it in the manner in
which I felt it ought to be said"

-Pablo Picasso-

it began with a journal entry

i wanted to build further
not so much the poem
but the notion
of
Dancin' on my Father's grave

What is that?

i had no idea

i ***was/amlin*** *denial*
a normal natural coping mechanism for trauma survivors

i didn't don't want to look at it ●

The denial is so dominant. We can actually experience the whole thing-feel everything and remember everything and then go back the next day, and say, "Nah, I imagined that. That wasn't real" That's why so many people come into recovery and back off, like, "If I believe this then I must be crazy."

Dave

i continue on path
seeking truth in my inward parts
seeking to convey the horror honestly

but i am in denial and will be unable

to express this directly because none of this ever really happened

do you see? my blinders

i numb myself and begin to work

hard

to tell

to heal fast

i choose to follow in the footsteps of my mentor

which is much like Neil Simon, the playwright, who simply sits and writes and allows the play to create itself.

the intellect stays outside

the door opens
i become a channel
i seek with my heart
and see as a moro
and together

as a group

it comes out

too rapidly for my liking

a greased pole

i know to do nothing

but let go

more

After a period of time i will gather the bouquets of what my dancers and i find most intriguing. i will then engage my intellect, seek the counsel of others, and do my best to implement the constructive criticism and shape the work as best as possible given my level of ability.

sometimes it seems like i am not listening

but

i am *in a special way*

i have a passionate spirit *like Anna*

but i need to withdraw to a safe place
to birth this work because i am
fr i gh t e n e d

a n d

f r a ct ured *a mirror with too many sharp parts and an empty frame i am not an "I"*
i do not have one voice but many and my work will reflect this it will take many years and

m any dances to fully
r e c o v e r the "I"

this is only one dance

I never forget how hard recovery is. Never. The worst part of it was nine years of hard work. We're talking twenty-four hours a day working our rear ends off in order to get well. Year after year of struggling, struggling, struggling. And I saw no possibility of it changing. I just knew I had to keep crawling. Looking back, it doesn't look like it took all that long, but going through it, it felt like it was endless.

Caryn Star Dancer

Multiplicity is a factor

....Spurred on by the fresh, crisp increase of the Still, Small Voice. I begin to see some of those silent, unspoken words never said. I saw a mask. It looked like me. I took it off and beheld a group of huddled, terrified people who shrank together to hide terrible secrets....

-Hope-

i am frightened

the 35 sum parts of the whole
are activated
for the first time in thirty five years they speak
they move they draw they compose

they are foreign to me they don't really exist they belong to someone else besides Misa i want to drown them disown them hide them but i can't

they are the workspace

they have been waiting

lifetimes to tell the truth

they clamor and fight

over this phrase and

that phrase to go right to

go left to use this dancer to use that

i hate them

i want them to go away

but they won't

they are in the workspace

We swim with the koi
in the subconcious.
It has no bottom .
We drop
to the hottest
part of hell -
  flame resistant-
impervious to time's delusional clicking.

The lost child
stands amidst the flames knocking at
God's door.

"Please sir, I have changed
my mind. Won't you please open the
door. My mind, I've changed it.
This life. i don't want it. Expel
my spirit from this form. Now. I can't
bear this burden. It is too much."

I HAD A DREAM AND IN THIS DREAM I SAT DRINKING COFFEE AND EATING DONUTS AT A MCDONALD'S CAFE. THE CAFE WAS NEXT TO A GAS STATION. TWO MEN IN THE BATHROOM BEGAN TO SMASH EACH OTHER'S HEADS INTO THE WALL. I FLED FEARING RAPE. I FLED TO A ROADSIDE AND SAW A WITHERED GRAY HAIRED GRANDMOTHER IN A SIDECAR PASS BY. SHE WAS LOOKING FOR HER SON THE MURDERER. I FLED. I CAME TO A TALL SKYSCRAPER MADE OF STEEL. I CLIMBED TO THE TOP COMING TO A ROOM WITH PEOPLE SITTING AROUND A TABLE REMINISCENT OF CHRIST'S LAST SUPPER. PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOSEMITE TAKEN BY ANSEL ADAMS LAY IN SEAGULL BLUE BOXES ON THE TABLE. THE WALLS OF THIS ROOM WERE MADE OF PAPER. LAUGHING CHILDREN APPEARED WITH MATCHES IN-BETWEEN THEIR TOES. THEY LIT THE PAPER. I FLED THE FLAMES TO THE BASE OF THE SKYSCRAPER. THE STATE POLICE WERE LOOKING FOR MY FATHER-THE MURDERER- SON OF GRANDMOTHER-MINE. A WOMAN WITH PALSY SO SO THIN IN A YELLOW SHIRT CAME LIMPING TOWARDS ME CARRYING A RIBBON CANDY SHAPED CANE. A HIDEOUS CREATURE WITH NO BONES DRAPED ITSELF OVER HER RIGHT SHOULDER. HER HANDS BECAME TWO SIDED BLADES SHAPED LIKE A BUTTERFLY. THE PALSIED WOMAN BEGAN TO SLICE OPEN THE BELLIES OF CHILDREN. I AWOKE SCREAMING. MY BELLY WAS CONVULSING AS IF IT WERE I BEING SLICED. MY LOVER CAME TO COMFORT ME. I FOUND I WAS NOT IN BED BUT IN THE SPARE ROOM AND DID NOT KNOW HOW I GOT THERE. ALTHOUGH I WAS AWAKE, THE IMAGES WOULD NOT CEASE, AND THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUED. PARALYZED FROM FEAR I SCREAMED AT THE WOMAN TO GO AWAY AS DIRECTED BY MY LOVER. SHE TRIED TO CHOKE ME. I TOLD HER TO STOP. I CLUNG TO MY LOVER AND TOGETHER WE WENT INTO THE KITCHEN TO GATHER A BIT OF SAGE TO BURN. AFTER A VERY LONG TIME THE IMAGES FADED. I CONTRACTED SHINGLES. MY MEDICATION

WORKED IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY ENABLING MY SUBCONSCIOUS TO FURTHER EXPLORE THE SHADOW OF MY PSYCHE.

I HAD MORE NIGHTMARES...OF CHILDREN BOILED AND BURNED LOCKED IN CAGES FILLED WITH CHICKEN SHIT...OF A WOMAN IN A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR WHOSE BONES BECAME KNIVES WHICH CLUNG TO HER SKIN...OF DECAPITATED HEADS...OF ROTTING TEETH FALLING FROM MY MOUTH...OF BEING COVERED IN EXCREMENT...HORROR AFTER HORROR...THEY CONTINUED...THESE NIGHTMARES...LEADING TO THE EVENTUAL DISCOVERY OF A DEEP DARK SECRET.

I BEGAN TO REMEMBER. I BECAME AWAKE IN THE NIGHTMARE OF MY CHILDHOOD- I REMEMBERED AND REMEMBERED AND REMEMBERED-ONE OR MORE MEMORIES EACH DAY FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS -FOLLOWED BY EVERY OTHER DAY FOR TWO MONTHS- THEN JUSTTHREE TIMES A WEEK.... AND FINALLY I MANAGED TO CONTAIN THE MEMORIES TO ONCE A WEEK. MY GUARDIAN ANGEL IN HUMAN FORM KEPT ME GOING WITH HIS PASSION, PATIENCE, AND UNDERSTANDING.

EACH TIME I REMEMBERED I PRAYED IT TO BE THE LAST. SOON THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT TO PRAY TO. THERE WAS SEEMINGLY NO LAST MEMORY. LAYERS AND LAYERS UNCOVERING SO MANY NAMES IT BECAME CONFUSING. STRANGE, PSYCHOTIC, TERRIFYING-MY MANY PARTS OF SELF APPEARED LAYING DOWN THEIR MASKS AND OFFERING WHAT BIT OF THE PUZZLE THEY HAD TO OFFER: A SMELL, A BODILY PAIN, AN IMAGE, A STORY, AN EMOTION, A TIME, A PLACE, A NAME. THEY FOUGHT IN THERAPY OVER WHO WOULD COME OUT NEXT TO TELL THEIR STORY. I LISTENED IN UTTER AMAZEMENT. "WHAT IN THE FUCK ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT THIS IS NOT ME I WAS A GOOD CHRISTIAN GIRL. I WENT TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY, READ MY BIBLE, FASTED- PRAYED- MEDITATED, AND EVEN HANDED OUT A FEW TRACTS HERE AND THERE." BUT I'D THROWN THAT ALL AWAY YOU SEE. TRUTH HAD BECOME MY MANTRA AND I WAS LIVING IN 'SIN'

WITH MY LOVER WISHING ON RAINBOW GILDED CLOUDS.

I AS HOST, ANNETTE, DID NOT SEE SIMPLY BECAUSE CHILDREN DON'T BELONG IN WAR ZONES. I SURVIVED BY IMMERSING MYSELF IN NATURE, IN SMILES, IN BEING A DO-GOODER SUPER ACHIEVER, AND HID IN THE BOMB SHELTER OF DENIAL OBLIVIOUS TO THE INSANITY OF HELL. SMILE, ALWAYS SMILE, YES SMILE...AND THE OLDER I GOT THE HARDER I WORKED TO SUPPRESS IT, MORE CAFFEINE, MORE SUGAR, ADD NICOTINE....GO GO GO....DON'T STOP GO GO GO... THE SHELTER OF DENIAL BURNING MY ASS ....I KNOW NOW WHY MY SIBLINGS SAT IN THE NUTHOUSE, I UNDERSTAND HOW MY SISTER JENNIFER COULD SPEND THE TOTAL OF A FIVE DIGIT FIGURE ON THERAPY-SHE WASN'T LYING AFTER ALL.... AND THEN IT HAPPENED.

ITS DONE. ITS DONE. ITS DONE. OVER AND OVER SOME ALTER EXCLAIMED. ITS DONE. I HAD COME FULL CIRCLE. I WAS BACK TO THE FIRST MEMORY. INITIALLY I FLOATED ABOVE THE EXPERIENCE AND WATCHED THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LIKE A MOVIE, FEELING NO PAIN, JUST DISBELIEF. THIS TIME, THE WOMAN ON THE TABLE BECAME MYSELF, AND I REALIZED THAT THE HORROR WAS MY OWN. THE MEMORY COINCIDED WITH THE MOST AGONIZING PLACE IN PROCESS WITH THESIS. IT COMPLETED ITSELF-THIS DANCE-AND I HAD A DREAM...

... AND IN THIS DREAM TEN YOUNG GIRLS REMINDING ME OF THE GIRLS I LOVED SO MUCH IN THE BOOKS ABOUT MADELINE WERE CAPTURED BY MEN IN A CEMENT DITCH. IN THIS DREAM THE MAN WHO FELT LIKE MYSELF SENT THE GIRLS AWAY GENTLY. HE GAVE BACK THEIR CONFISCATED BELONGINGS WRAPPED IN WHITE TISSUE PAPER. TISSUE PAPER LIKE THE TISSUE PAPER I USED TO WRAP UP MY DANCER'S GIFTS. THE GIRLS WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PRISON CAMP. THEY HAD BECOME PRISONERS OF WAR IN A LARGE STADIUM

WITH CEMENT SEATS . ONE GIRL FEELING THE WIND WHO FELT LIKE MYSELF RUSHED BACK TO GIVE THE MAN WHO LET THEM GO A GIFT. A RASPBERRY COLORED VOTIVE CANDLE. THE GIRLS DISAPPEARED. THE MAN WHO FELT LIKE MYSELF KEPT THE CANDLE LIT BY WORKING WITH THE WAX AND WICK. CAPTIVATED BY THE MEMORY OF HER INNOCENCE HE WAITED FOR THE GIRL'S RETURN. TWENTY YEARS WENT BY, AND SURE ENOUGH, SHE RETURNED FULL GROWN. WITH HER REAPPEARANCE SEVERAL UNROLLED PROGRAMS FROM MY THESIS CONCERT MANIFESTED. THE LOVE IN THE MAN'S HEART BURST. THE TWO, WHO FELT LIKE MYSELF, FELL INTO A PASSIONATE EMBRACE WITH NO PENETRATION LOVING EACH OTHER COMPLETELY.

AND SO, THROUGH MY DREAMS, MY INTENT TO HEAL SPEAKS POSITIVELY OF PROGRESS AS DOES A CERTAIN DESIRE. A DESIRE TO PAINT AN OLD CHAIR YELLOW, SIT IN IT, AND LET THE REST OF RED DRAIN FROM MY WARTORN SOUL....TO LET IT GO DOWN AND OUT THROUGH THE SOLES OF MY FEET INTO THE MOUTH OF MOTHER, SHE AS EARTH WILL LET IT REST, TURN IT INTO YET ANOTHER GOLD VEIN, AND FEED THE HUNGRY HEART OF MY RAVAGED CHILD SUSPENDED BLIND IN TIME.

Emergence

My dreams are clearer

as well as my poetry

my body moves as an integrated unit
in space more often than not

What more could I ask?

The balance of perfection tips the scale of nausea
dumping fresh fertilizer on virgin soil.

I dig Deeper yet into the wellspring
of life and birth a vision of a
future free of qualms
had by more
hard
work
sweat
frustration

Pina finds the words for me

There are too many impressions, much more than you can use...There is a longing to do much more, but you can only do a little. So much of creating this work was coming here. Sometimes it comes out later. This is a difficult thing. I cannot promise anything, of course,
except that I am sincere.

-Pina Baush-

Post-Performance Summary and Analysis

In its totality-its overall impact-"Dancing on my Daddies Grave" achieved a deep emotional experience for most of its audience. One dancer said "a lot of people were blown away by this piece." I am proud of my achievement, which was described by a psychologist in the audience as "going deeply into the experience of an individual so far as to reach forces which favor and torment us in many forms."

I still am amazed at the process of the past year-the conflict with faculty, the struggles to communicate with certain of my dancers, and the way so much material was created and discarded before the final creation occurred. And even that "final creation" evolved in the course of a mere three evenings. The dancers ran down the stairs screaming and yelling closing night because at last they had achieved an awareness of each other in the timing and breath of the entirety.

Did it achieve my ideal? Far from it. I spent much time after presenting the final form to you in re-visiting sections which failed to reach the impact I had sought. Following Levi's solo, I felt from my inner-most parts a brief statement wanting to be spoken through Nycole. The duet only scratched the surface of what wanted to be said and deserved expansion. It was helped though, on the final night, by the couple actually touching before exiting. The trio did not come close as a trio to falling into the abyss of insanity, lack of control, and despondent please for release. In an attempt to implement the constructive criticism I opted to restructure the work in an attempt to bring more clarity, brevity, and meaning to the work. The trio was the section I cut deepest into, and a part of me regrets this, although I still feel it the proper decision.

Although I began working on the second day of the school year, I found that I could only explore the choreographic process rather than complete sections of my thesis. I wish now that I had had foreknowledge of the sporadic availability of dancers. Many times work I began with one set of individuals had to be left untouched for weeks.

At each rehearsal several key people would fail to show up. Rather than reconstruct what we all had forgotten in the interim, I often felt it more fruitful to create something new, tailored to those dancers who showed up. Perhaps this was what Crystyne had in mind when she opposed my starting so early, and in fact, if I had known that this process would exhaust both the dancers and myself, I might have waited until January. Then, perhaps, the dancers would have felt the urgency, been less confused by all the phrases made and discarded. I am glad I stuck it out rather than running away or choosing to transfer to a different department. I accumulated choreographic experience and a vocabulary of phrases and gestures to fuel many future works.

There is one factor I failed to consider: that dances have a life and consciousness all their own. When my work was compete, and it came time to let go, the life force of the piece continued to work in an extraordinary way. I witnessed, in the tech runs of preparation, energy and focus being sapped from main figures and injected into weaker parts of the whole. It was as if the work was saying "this room is well constructed; now I have need of cleaning out the attic." This juggling from night to night enabled each figure to more fully find who they were in the grand scheme of things. My greatest delight was in bringing one anonymous dancer to a place that helshe never thought achievable by presenting them with opportunity, support, and persevering insistence. Transformation of the actorlactressldancer in process is crucial if one desires an audience itself to be deeply moved and affected. It was also very significant to me that Saturday's performance was attended by a group of ten teenagers who had either suffered of perpetrated child molestation. I hope that they saw that even the most destructive experiences-which lead one through realms deemed insane by most people-can be shared in a way which makes it easier for others to acknowledge their own pain and so move forwards beyond it. Of course, the whole process of creating with regard to experiences which I have still not completely transcended caused me to be on edge, raw, protective of a process which has brought me great healing. I am grateful for the environment which aided this work.

And, in a less personal way, feel that my own aesthetic has been clarified (sometimes in passionate discourse with equally passionate spirits). My future work will be all the more clear and emphatic as a result.

It may not be any more palatable, though, because I am realizing that my inclination, individuality, and genius (in the original sense as used by the ancient Roman of a guiding spirit which accompanies every human being) is drawn towards the Dionesian rather than the Apollonian aspect of life. That is to say, a certain rawness, roughness, unpredictability, disrespect, and even defiance attracts me more than polished forms and story lines amenable to intellectual comprehension. Watching "Dancing on my Daddies Grave" I saw my strength in maintaining a type of unpredictability in which the impossible cropped up relatively often, whether in form of a technical gesture such as Levi's horizontal tour en l'air or the juxtaposition of naiveté and earthiness in Jessica's character.

I believe the future challenge for me as a choreographer will involve maintaining and expanding the meaningful absurdity of my style while developing a tighter grasp of the forms which heighten its potency and accessibility.

Conclusion

"When my left hand speaks"

i am here to heal
my aspirations
are many

i don't know how to communicate with words what is happening to me
the changes facilitated by angels working on a cellular level
communicate with

breath wind color

meaning precedes metaphor

by and by the work takes shape

i do nothing and everything all at once

misa often gets in the way

aesthetic is a learned thing
like language

the tree exists with no though that it is a tree
the tree has always existed
in some form

misa functions well in a task oriented mode
she likes to be busy
busy is the best coping mechanism
when she is busiest she doesn't have time to feel directly the pain

misa threads her fire to others
and together they find

commonalty

the special window opens
seeds fly through her heart
planting themselves in the physical
we gather hurt laugh get frustrated with our ordinary humanness
and forget
god is the audience
and is manifest on a level that vibrates much quicker than mortal
perception

honesty is a witch with a pitchfork that torments me as multi-images
caught in the reflection of shattered glass

laugh

little by little we gather

thankfulness is a bouquet of daisies plucked
each center
resolved

i love you

but get to work pay attention be on time
and understand when we can't quite get it together

the loveliest gardens have an order dictated by
wind water bugs n' birds
not a rehearsal schedule

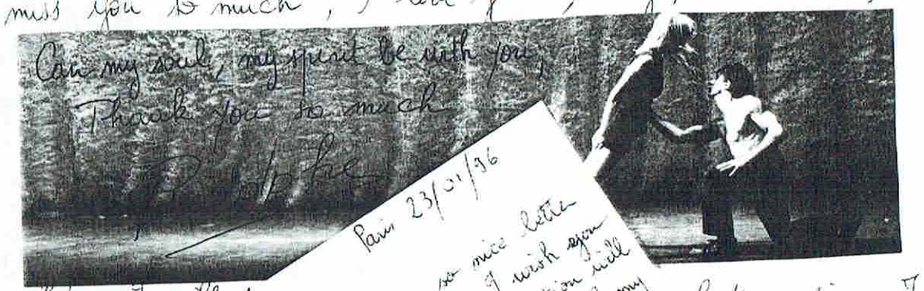
balance

finding a natural way of being as a 20th century alien

production is secondary to patience
patience is primary to process
faith gives the connectors broken by time a chance to heal
the heart is wounded and wanting of love and nurturance
the children are wet cold hungry
shyness turns her left cheek

LAKE DAWN
NET WT. 23 LBS.
021
BARTLETT PEARS
SCOTTS VALLEY FRUIT EXCHANGE
LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA 95453
PRODUCE OF U.S.A.

with Karine Saporta (one of the best choreographer from France)...
So, I think I can be happy to find a work for [only] one month
after my arrival (I have been really worried after my arrival; in-
deed I didn't know what to do and I have been really
sick because of the fucking weather in France in this season)
But now, it's the past and I know what I'm doing. But
you know, whatever I'm doing, I really think I will never
forget this wonderful experience I passed with you. I
miss you so much; I love you, Courage; I will be always with you,



PS: I will

Paris 23/01/96

Dear Mika,
I was really happy to receive a so nice letter
of you. I know I'm a little late but I wish you
a happy new year and I hope your creation will
be wonderful. In January, Paris is really gloomy
and so cold, in fact I miss L.A a lot with
this weather and the atmosphere but I have no time
to be sad. I have such a lot of auditions in
Paris and in France I have found a very interes
thing job in a very big modern dance company but I have no
last creation; I
hope, so
mistakes; I hope
understand!

Dear Misa,

I have been reading so many letters from you I am inspired to write to you. I am listening to the rain bang out of gutters, enjoying my red tongue room and not-very smelly Cinnamon candle. The worst semester ever is over for me; I luxuriate.

I wanted to thank you for your trust and openness in letting me read your writing. So many secrets, so much exposure. I sense you are like me — an exhibitionist with words. Why is it so much easier on the page? Also, though we have worked together in such a deep way, I don't know you that well as a friend and companion (now I feel I do) so it must have been a huge act of faith on your part to lend me your letters. I loved reading them, in all their rich angst, frustration, horror, playfulness, arguing, enlightening, and honesty. These that I return to you now I have not marked up very much cause I got the feeling we would not use this text just yet for your thesis - don't for a minute think that means I didn't identify with them, because I did! I would love to work with these texts sometime, just let me know.

I have such an enormous amount of respect for you, Misa. I don't think the wonder of your life could ever be fully understood. It's so crazy hard in rehearsal you'll just point-blank blurt out something like, "This is about me being tortured and raped..." and the dancers just kind of stare with wide eyes and go, "okay." Like it's nothing or not nothing but ~~they're~~ as if (as if!) we could ever process that, really. I just cannot comprehend - and I wonder if you do — the kind of strength you possess.

I will never forget the stillness — the exquisite — scarred — dangerous quality of air in the room when you created the kneeling cliché, cripple, etc. phrase. I felt the volatility in the space — the importance of quiet — you were creating and exulting your own ritual right there in front of us, and it was sacred. I knew you were scared. I couldn't express my overwhelming need to support you. When it was all over you burst into laughter — issued us of witches and counting with fingers — the curse using you counteracted the gravity of the phrase with frightened relief. Then there's those rehearsals where the movement snowballed out of you so fast we could barely keep up — you were possessed — or guided — it's amazing how things come out of you like that. Me, I'm a slow-trodding choreographer, second-guessing my every move — scared stiff of repetition. I love to witness your stream of flow, your out-of-control flood of consciousness — in the studio and on paper, and from your mouth, at the ends of rehearsals — spontaneous, unearthly talk of trees and eggs and blood and love, always love.

I am concerned that the confusion of scheduling and finding time and the turnover of dancers and the permutations of material and the complications that go with all these things get to you too much, or that you are so easily hurt by somebody's impatience or indistinct. I know that you, like me, have a capacity to hear/see only negative, all bad, and the "bad guys" come out and start slaughtering yourself for it. And we both know there is no room for creativity or problem-solving in the midst of a self crucifixion. You give so much thanks and support and nurturing and we don't seem to reciprocate in the same verbal way — we just

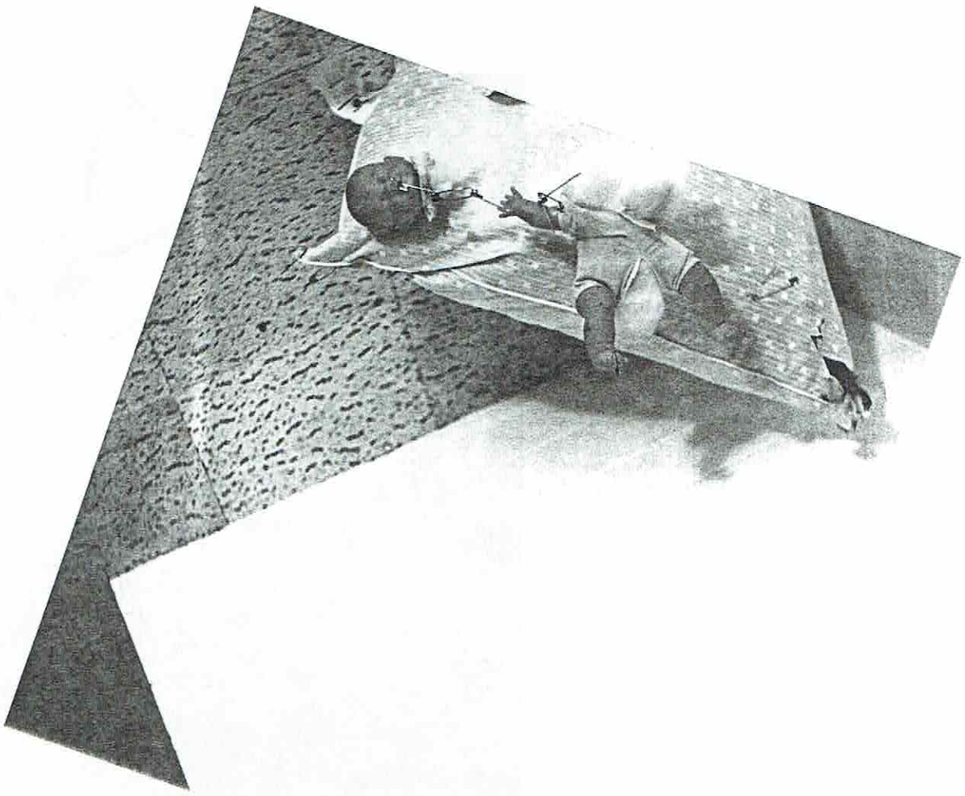
keep doing the work as best we can, maybe hoping that shows our gratitude to you...? I understand not getting positive comments on what you are sharing away at, and it sucks! So often we take the good for granted and only meditate the bad. Don't let anything as piddling as scheduling get in the way of, as you put it to me so beautifully, that something in the universe that has found its window in you and you in it. If you have survived this far, you can do anything! Do you know that? Is there still a big part of you that says it is not allowed to be? Don't let it feed anybody's criticism of you. Here's a little analogy for ya: a complaint is to the worth of your dance
as
a dust mote is to mother earth.

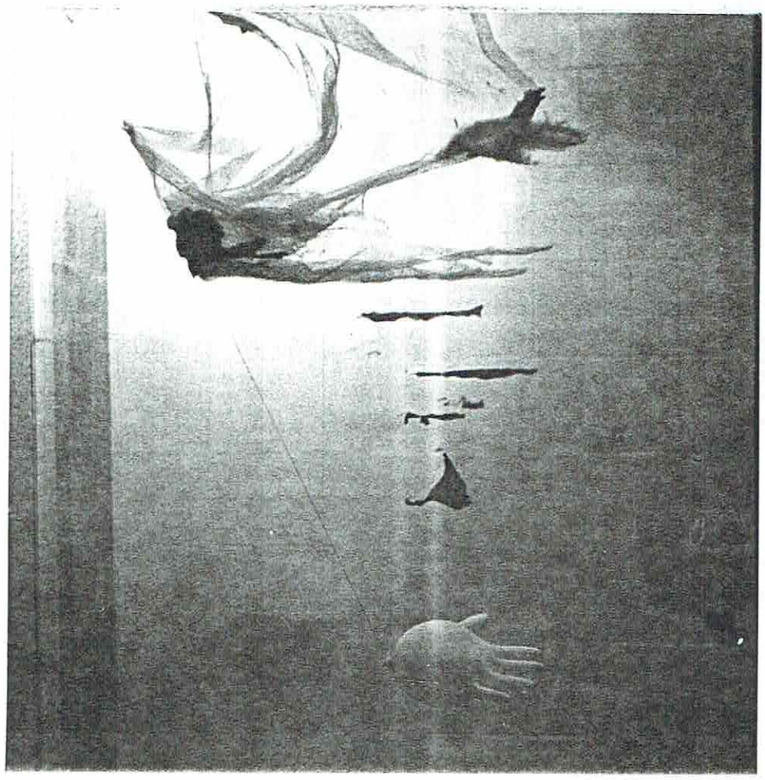
Of course, I am curious — who is Carlotta? Sandra? Chantal? Maybe someday I will have more understanding. You are such a writer. Have you thought about taking Writing for Performance with Lee Fleming? It's great. He exudes the most platonic, trusting, unconditional love and faith in others. Or there's Fiction. I love reading your musings on the nature of creativity.

Okay woman, I'm tired. I love you!

Love
Jessica

P.S.
I kept one of
the drawings of the
doggie cause there were
two - hope that's okay?
Love, -Jess





Appendix I

Synopsis of work completed in residency at Cal Arts

Dances

M.F.A. I

Duet *"Much too Soon" performed by Rainbow Underhill & Tiffani Snow. Provided opportunity for self-clarification of the relationship between movement and text. Understanding crucial for development of thesis concert. Gained confidence in self as a writer for theatre. Gleaned sufficient information from working with director Bruce Whitney to successfully direct the actresses used for my thesis concert.*

Solo *"Harvest Moon" performed by myself. Work set the foundation for solo danced by Kathleen Reese in thesis concert. Work in progress was viewed by BeBe Miller. Her enthusiasm over my ability to "take her with me" in movement provided self with much confidence in my work.*

Last Dance

Trio *"flux" performed by Jessica Lawing, Kathleen Reese, and Luciana Achugar. This work nurtured the skills necessary to complete a work quickly with the minimal amount of rehearsal time without sacraficing integrity.*

Writing

Work with **Carl Daugenti** in my first year of residency unleashed the writer within. He encouraged me to follow my instinct in seeking "departure" from formal written structures. He accepted with a laugh a paper written in an alphabet created by self (with code).
He received yet another paper which consisted of "hyper text" strung and attatched to a main text with black thread and band-aides.
The content was not of much value- the process was. I began to question the relationship between language, power, and the form of modern dance and art in general. **Sandy Cohen's** course 'Language and Philosophy' clarified my observation.
Much of the indoctrination and torture I experienced as a child used 'writing' as a vehicle to disempower self. Departing from the 'norm' freed my writer's tongue resulting in a large body of literary works.

Visual Art

I was given free rein to depart from the standard in order to forumulate an appropriate medium for my thesis proposal. It came forth as as installation which reflected the ephemeral nature of dances which exist in time and space. The installation took three consecutive days & nights to install. The event was documented by school photographer Steve Gunther. I am told that some of the images will be included in Cal Arts next school catalog.

Theatre

Created a 20 minute movement piece with eight actors and director **Donna Hill**. Performed December of 1994 in the main gallery. The work was very well received by both theatre school faculty and students. Employed emerging philosophical views about process to enable actors to tap into past & present life characterizations. Through use of breath, hypnosis, and guided visualizations actors sourced organic movement vocabulary which became the foundation for the work.

Music

Research/collaboration with composer/ percussionist **Carlos Stasis**. Began the work with intention of exploring discoveries made while working with an experimental theatre group prior to my residency at Cal Arts. Considered role reversals of dancer as musician and musician as dancer. Work proved cathartic for self. Carlos is a shaman of sorts as well as an incredibly supportive, sensitive individual. He enabled me to experience rhythm as ritual for healing. Gathered movement vocabulary for future works. Overcame a fear of drums. Received positive evaluation from Larry Attaway who agreed to oversee the project for credit.

Collaborated with **Russell Burt** on the sound score for "Dancing on my Daddies Grave". Recorded and performed "Don't Hang on to Momma's singing" , piano and vocal soundscapes, specifically for thesis project. In addition we recorded much additional work for future projects. This work ended a year long drought away from the piano. Discouraged from developing a desire to compose 'Phillip' quit working. In retrospect, it may have been a good thing. What 'Philip" created after the hiatus proved evocative, inspirational, and incredibly sensitive.

Film

Collaborated with **Bill Russell** on a twenty minute film "Dancing on my Father's Grave." Two weeks after my arrival at Cal Arts I sat down with Bill and we drew out a story board for the piece. I found myself 'frozen' during the process yet managed to 'tell' the sequence of events while Bill drew the pictures and added creative input. Although the film was not used as a part of my thesis as originally intended the raw footage provided a wonderful element for my installation. Sound from the film was used for the dance, and the birthing of these particular images fueled the vision for my thesis project. First time my alter identities felt comfortable to emerge becoming vital contributors to the work. Especially as intuitive guides to specific sites for filming.

Costume design

Designed and constructed the costumes for both my M.F.A. I and M.F.A. II concerts. I have no doubt that I will continue to express myself creatively as a designer. Special thanks to **Crystyne Lawson** who encouraged me to design for my thesis concert. Discovered that sculpting with fabric is no different than with any other medium. Was able to complete the designs two weeks ahead of time leaving ample time to make necessary modifications.

Thesis Concert

Forty five minutes of choreography presented as an evening length work. Broken down into three sections. The first section was built by combining four pools of material created independently of each other: Levi's solo, a duet created in one rehearsal for Kathleen and Levi, and material sourced from two different groupings that met once a week Fall of 1995. The second section was built from three different pools of material: further exploration of a composition assignment using a trash can, movement material from "Flux", and "Harvest Moon". The last section was created by mixing four different pools of material: text from "Much too soon", movement created with the trio , and elements from the two groupings of five that met once a week fall of 1995.

I approached the work with the intention of "simply going to work" as a choreographer seeking to maximize the availability of time, space, and dancers.

Appendix II

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oh i can't get it out of me this time

it is stuck

in the doorjam

with the pair of polka dot boxers

the spotted dalmation wears

the cat bristles

and i brush my hair with bared claws

my tangles become brittle branches

laced with lye

my skin parched, patched, splotchy

ages much too quickly for father time

he sends me away with a curse

seven ticks a second

counting

zero as one

the dial turns

slicing space

between it sllips

the shy creature

with prongs

for fingers

the pain my

past

memories

from centuries

ago

weaves

me this

unknown sex of a being

into self

and i become

the sparkle in the liquid

diamond of an eye

singular

odd shaped

more square that round

with green flecks of

algae

that

cover a sea lining a prehistoric

cage of bone

they live a bump

after the big bang

collectors

that divinate

ruminate

and play

war games

with

God

practicing

death

over

and

over

and

over

and

living in the skip of every

scratched record

they wait to snatch

parts of me

leave no trace behind

for less than a scent

or tick of time

flashbacks

of everything that ever

has can will or won't

exist

they laugh

a square giggle

hideous movement

long silvery penises make their way through

all parts of who

i am

revealing nothing

but empty space

filled with

lies

i

find

a

place

to

hide

they don't know of

because goddess earth

holds a key

in

the

space

be tween

her

two

front

teeth

and cups a single breast beneath

the yawn

of

time's brother Mary